

King County Agriculture Commission
(Notes from meeting)
July 22, 2004
King County Fairgrounds Field House Conference Center
Enumclaw, WA

Commissioners Present: George Irwin, Dick Gradwohl, Bob Tidball, Grant Davidson, Ben Kodama and Gaylia Bullock

Commissioners Absent: Ewing Stringfellow, Jason Roetcisoender, Judy Duff, Michael Blakely, Roger Calhoon and Nancy Hutto

Staff: Eric Nelson, Laurie Clinton, Steve Evans, Judy Herring and Claire Dyckman, King County (KC) Dept. of Natural Resources and Parks (DNRP) Agriculture Programs

Guest Agency Staff: Bob Burns, Deputy Director, KCDNRP; Karen Wolf, KC Executive's Office; Daryl Grigsby, Director, KCDNRP Water and Resource Lands Division; Jeanette McKague, Legislative Aide to KC Councilmember David Irons; Diane Fish, Legislative Aide to KC Council member Steve Hammond; Mike Mactutis, City of Kent; and Josh Monaghan, King Conservation District (KCD)

Guests: Judy Taylor, Marguerite Sutherland, Tom Quigley, Bob Meeks, Greg Lynn, Don Stuart, and Garth and Isabelle Moe

A quorum was not attained so no official minutes are recorded. Vice Chair George Irwin apologized to all in attendance for the lack of a quorum. Commissioners requested staff to work to ensure that this does not happen again.

The June meeting minutes couldn't be approved, but Laurie announced that there would be a revised version since there was a mix-up in identifying parcels from the Farmland and Fields discussion. The revised June minutes will be sent out with the August mailing.

Eric provided an update on the wetland-banking project on a large former dairy directly north of the King County line and a Farmlands Preservation Property. Judy Herring will be meeting with KC staff (members of the science group and a hydrologist) to learn the possible impacts on the KC farmland. Eric suggested that the September Ag Commission meeting be in the Sammamish Valley with a field trip earlier in the day for Commissioners. Laurie will look into the details. He also explained about the changes in Clearing and Grading regulations and the roles and responsibility of agencies involved with Hydraulic Project Approvals (HPAs). Claire briefed the Commission on the status of the Agriculture Public Rule for the Critical Areas Ordinance (CAO). She is working closely with Josh and others at the KCD on this.

Josh announced the KCD Annual meeting on August 15th; the Ground Water workshop in Maple Valley on August 12th; and a Farm-Forestry Christmas Tree Farm Tour on September 19th.

Steve reported on the Ag Program Committee meeting. One topic of note was in regards to the possible county owned farmland surplus sale. Commissioners would like to provide recommendations for the conditions of sale and Judy is working on the details. Steve asked Commissioners to please be sure and mark their calendars for the December 9th Western WA Ag Commission Summit in Pierce County. He also announced that on August 5th, Snohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon and Ron Sims will hold a Puget Sound Fresh press conference at South 47th Farm in the Sammamish Valley. He extended an invitation to all the Commissioners.

Daryl Grigsby, Director of Water and Land Resources Division, came to meet Commissioners and to talk about the Business Plan being developed for the Water and Land Resources Division. He explained the purpose of the plan and the likely changes it will create in the Division. He described program changes that are due to a shrinking budget and funding reallocations. Daryl said these changes were conducive to a shift in the division as it prepares for its rural future. He said he would keep the Commission updated on the Business Plan.

Karen Wolf and Bob Burns returned again to answer questions for the Farmland and Fields Project (Muller Farm) discussion.

Karen made a special reminder to the Commission that the County Council Public Hearing for the Comprehensive Plan changes is tentatively set for Monday September 20th. She encouraged Commissioners to attend since there will be a couple issues the Ag Commission has dealt with and support would be helpful.

Bob announced the significant change in the Farmlands and Field Project is that the only part remaining, is the swap of Parcel B for 60 Acres South. The Lake Washington Youth Soccer Association (LWYSA) agreed at their June 30th Board of Director's meeting to proceed with the Parcel B/60Acres South swap and not pursue the other parts of the proposal. The Commissioners continued their discussion with Bob and Karen. The conditions of the swap were reviewed and more questions were asked about water rights; appraisals and assessed values; tax program status and other mechanics of the proposal.

Comments were made by Greg Lynn and Bob Meeks on behalf of the King/Pierce Farm Bureau; Marguerite Sutherland on behalf of Preserve Land for Agriculture Now (PLAN); Don Stuart on behalf of American Farmlands Trust; and Judy Taylor on behalf of Upper Green Valley Preservation Society. They all voiced their concern on the detrimental impact they feel this would have on the Farmlands Preservation Program.

Bob agreed to return in August (Karen will be on vacation) for a final discussion since there was no quorum. The goal is for the Commission to make a decision at that meeting in order to have a formal recommendation for Council. The Ordinance for the swap is tentatively scheduled to go to Council in September. George thanked Bob and Karen again for their time.

Mike Mactutis from the City of Kent came to show the details of a habitat restoration project the City is proposing to do if it receives a KC Conservation Futures grant. A letter of support from the Ag Commission would be appreciated for inclusion in the grant application packet. He presented a map and explained the details of the project. There was a short discussion by the Commissioners. Mike will also return for the August meeting.

George thanked everyone for attending and on behalf of the Commission he apologized again for the lack of a quorum to conduct official business.